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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 NASSAU 001156

SIPDIS

INL/LP FOR KEVIN BROWN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [SNAR](#) [KCRM](#) [BF](#) [OPBAT](#)

SUBJECT: 2005 COUNTERNARCOTICS CERTIFICATION
REPORT CARD (BAHAMAS)

REF: STATE 94578

1. In accordance with Reftel request, Post submits the following report card on The Bahamas' counter narcotics performance during 2005:

1) The USG asked the GCOB to complete its National Anti-Drug Plan.

-- During the Joint Task Force meeting, on December 13, 2005, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced that the long-awaited national drug strategy had been approved by Cabinet. The Government is expected to initiate the implementation of the plan during mid-2005. The Embassy was informed that the government of the Bahamas has identified a building to house and a person to lead, the National Drug Secretariat.

2) The USG asked the GCOB to continue to facilitate the extradition of individuals involved in drug trafficking.

-- In an unexpected decision issued on May 10, 2005, Supreme Court Justice Jon Isaacs ruled that the U.S.-Bahamas Extradition Treaty was valid but constitutionally unenforceable due to a failure of the Government of the Bahamas to obtain parliamentary approval for the public funds expended to process and implement extradition requests from the USG. The Government immediately requested a stay of the Judge's ruling and said that it would lodge an immediate appeal to the Court of Appeals. The appeal is set to be heard June 21-21, 2004. It is expected that the losing party will seek appeal to the Privy Council in London. Although the GCOB communicated to the Embassy that the status of the validity of the Extradition Act remains unaffected by Judge Isaacs' ruling, Post is closely watching developments and their implications for the more than twenty extradition requests at different stages in the system.

3) The USG asked the GCOB to continue its anti-money laundering and asset confiscation efforts.

-- After intense scrutiny by international organizations and the USG, and a reallocation of resources, the Attorney General's Office has markedly improved the timeliness of its responses to Mutual Legal Agreement requests. In December 2004, an MOU was signed to facilitate the exchange of information between the Central Bank of The Bahamas and the US Securities and Exchange Commission.

-- In June 2005, The Financial Action Task Force expressed satisfaction with the level of responsiveness of the GCOB to information requests from international regulators. The Embassy continues to encourage the Bahamas to continue to provide adequate resources to meet its international commitments.

4) The USG asked the GCOB to continue its efforts against drug transportation and distribution.

-- The Royal Bahamas Police Force (RBPf) continued to collaborate closely and effectively with the Drug Enforcement Administration and other USG agencies in targeting and dismantling major Bahamian drug trafficking organizations. After the takedown of major drug organizations in what was Operation "Busted Manatee," that netted 14 arrests and 2 extraditions; law

enforcement observers have seen an increase in drug smuggling activity in Haitian small vessels or sloops. These vessels are traditionally used to smuggle illegal migrants.

-- During the first five months of 2005, the RBPF seized 68 lbs of cocaine and 3.8 mt of marijuana and made 556 arrests. (Comparable figures for a similar portion of 2004 were 1.62 mt of cocaine, 3.14 mt of marijuana, and 53 arrests.)

-- The RBPF's three NAS-donated fast response boats continue to provide an "end game" for OPBAT helicopter pursuits of drug smuggling "go-fast" boats. NAS funding has made possible to keep the operational readiness of these important assets. In addition NAS has supported the acquisition of intelligence-gathering equipment to make these missions more targeted and efficient.

-- The Comprehensive Maritime Agreement approved last summer is being fully implemented and has effectively replaced patchwork of law enforcement agreements and arrangements, some of which pre-dated Bahamian independence in 1973. The agreement has assisted both in counter-drug and migrant smuggling operations allowing for a more effective use of GCOB and USG assets.

5) The USG asked the GCOB to enact legislation for the control of precursor chemicals.

-- The Government-drafted precursor legislation has yet to reach Cabinet for its review and approval. Because The Bahamas is not known to have a precursor problem, this legislation is not a Bahamian Government priority and is unlikely to be introduced into parliament before the end of 2005.

ROOD